When the tour came to an end in 1861,1 went to London with my father to find an engagement, while Kate joined the stock company at Bristol. We still gave the " Drawing-room Entertainment" at Ryde in the summer, and it still drew large audiences.

In London my name was put on an agent's books in the usual way, and presently he sent me to Madame Alhina de Rhona, who had not long taken over the management of the Royal Soho Theatre and changed its name to the Royalty. The improvement did not stop at the new play. French workmen had swept and garnished the dusty, dingy place and transformed it into a theatre as dainty and pretty as Madame de Rhona herself. Dancing was Madarne's strong point, but she had been very successful as an actress too, first in Paris and Petersburg, and then in London at the St. James's andDrury Lane. What made her go into management on her own account I don't know. I suppose she was ambitious, and rich enough for the enterprise.

At this time I was " in standing water/' as Malvolio says of Viola when she is dressed as a boy. I was neither child nor woman—a long-legged girl of about thirteen, still in short skirts, and feeling that I ought to have long ones. However, when I set out with lather to sec Madame de Rhona, I was very smart. I borrowed Kate's new bonnet—pink silk trimmed with black lace—and thought I looked nice in it. So did father, for he said on the way to the theatre that pink was my colour. In fact, I am sure it was the bonnet that made Madame de

Rhona engage me on the spot!

She was the first Frenchwoman I had ever met, and I was tremendously interested in her. Her neat and expressive ways made me feel very " small," or rather *big* and clumsy, even at the first interview. A quick-tempered,